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Mayor of Buffalo, Homeless Alliance of Western New York Unveil Ten-Year Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness

On March 20, 2006, on the steps of Buffalo City Hall, the Homeless Alliance of Western New York unveiled its 10-Year Plan to End Long-Term Homelessness in Buffalo and Erie County, titled PRISM: A Community Solution to Homelessness. (PRISM stands for Prevention, Resources, Independence through Housing, Services, and Maintenance). The Homeless Alliance has been working with the community on the plan since late 2004, delaying its release to secure the support of Buffalo's new mayor. Mayor Brown, City Commissioner of Community Services Tanya Perrin-Johnson, and Erie County Department of Social Services Commissioner Michael Weiner were among the many who gathered in support of the 10-year plan. A special message from Federal Interagency Council on Homelessness Regional Coordinator Carleton Lewis was read.

In his comments, Mayor Byron Brown noted, "The Homeless Alliance of Western New York is to be commended for developing a ten-year strategic plan that represents a reorientation of the homeless service community and of the City of Buffalo toward ending, not merely relieving, homelessness."

Buffalo and Erie County's 10-year plan, PRISM: A Community Solution to Homelessness, is the product of an

exhaustive planning process, working in concert with a national movement toward addressing and ending homelessness through strategic community planning. Input from community data collection efforts, local experts, concerned citizens, homeless and formerly homeless persons, and national trends and best practices all contributed to the final plan.

Notably, the Alliance kicked off its PRISM Project with a large-scale, 24-hour survey of over one thousand at-risk, currently, and formerly homeless individuals. PRISM Project Coordinator Katie McHugh Connolly explained, "The voices of homeless and at-risk persons grounded the development of the plan, and the Alliance is committed to carrying this input through the implementation of the PRISM plan." Though facilitated by the Homeless Alliance of Western New York, the plan itself very much belongs to the community, and reflects the community's experiences, concerns, and vision of the future. "We are talking about a community-wide commitment to making change. No one should be homeless, and addressing long-term homelessness is a step – a big, ambitious step – in the right direction," stated Bill O'Connell, Homeless Alliance Executive Director.

The national push to end long-term homelessness is endorsed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the current presidential administration, and bipartisan political leaders. Ten-year plans have been completed by many cities, counties, and states nationwide, including Atlanta, Georgia; Denver, Colorado; Tampa, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; Columbus, Ohio; Albany; Memphis, Tennessee; New York City; and Washington, D.C. See the plan at www.wnyhomeless.org/Plan.pdf.

For more information about the Alliance or 10-year plan, contact Ms. Kathryn McHugh Connolly of the Homeless Alliance of WNY at 716-853-1101.

HUD Recovery Efforts in Louisiana

By Murrianna Holmes, Program Assistant

I left Buffalo, New York for Baton Rouge, Louisiana on October 27, 2005. I knew I was going on a disaster assistance detail but did not know what work I would be performing or where in Louisiana I would be working.

When I arrived, I was assigned to the Joint Housing Solution Center in Baton Rouge. That Center consisted of HUD and FEMA staff, along with contractors. Our main mission was to house evacuees.

The next day, two of my HUD co-workers from other offices and I embarked on a familiarization tour of the greater New Orleans area. As we drove south from Baton Rouge, we started seeing damage from Hurricane Katrina. The closer we got to New Orleans, the more we saw. By the time we hit Kenner, blue roofs were

everywhere. (The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers handles the Blue Roof Program where they use blue tarps to temporarily fix damaged roofs.) You could see trees down and buildings and signs damaged.

We continued on into New Orleans. From the I-10, we spotted armed soldiers patrolling one of the neighborhoods. We passed under viaducts wondering each time if this was one of the ones we had seen on TV. We saw the Superdome with repairs already underway.

Due to curfews and restricted access, we simply drove on the Interstate until we reached New Orleans East before we left the Interstate. When we got off, it was like a ghost town. Damage everywhere. Hardly a soul in sight. No electricity so no lights, no stores open, no stoplights. Pleasure boats in the meridians of the streets. Waterlines on cars and buildings.

This was nine weeks after Hurricane Katrina had hit the Gulf Coast.



Lower 9th Ward At Industrial Canal, New Orleans Louisiana

The next day we rolled up our shirtsleeves and began to work in earnest. We were all over the state. We visited hotels meeting with staff and evacuees explaining HUD's Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program (KDHAAP). We visited housing authorities. We visited shelters. We sought

housing for special needs cases. We attended town meetings. We met with our counterparts from FEMA. We worked in Disaster Recovery Centers. We worked with the newly created Louisiana Recovery Authority. We saw more devastation and heard more stories. Speaking with the evacuees, we soon discovered that not only were their stories different but they were the same. Loss. Separation. Destruction. No jobs. No homes. Fighting with insurance companies. We wondered how they coped.

I was in Florida last year and learned that I should put together a disaster readiness kit and have a plan for evacuation but never got around to it. After seeing what happened on the Gulf Coast this past fall both from the news reports on TV and first hand, this is something I will be doing and doing soon. I encourage everyone to do the same. You can visit www.ready.gov for further information for yourself, your family, and your workplace. Be prepared. One never knows where the next disaster will strike.

HUD Publishes Fiscal Year 2006 Funding Notice Making \$2.2 Billion Available Through 39 Individual Programs

On March 8, 2006, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson unveiled HUD's Fiscal Year 2006 SuperNOFA that officially makes available approximately \$2.2 billion in grants through 39 individual programs. In January, HUD published the first part of this year's funding notice to give applicants a jump-start in preparing this year's applications and to promote early electronic registration.

This year's SuperNOFA will continue the Department's shift toward requiring nearly all grant applications to be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov. Like last year, those seeking funding through HUD's *Continuum of Care* homeless assistance programs will not be required to submit their applications electronically.

What's New in the World of CDBG

On June 10, 2005, HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) published a draft performance measurements Notice in the Federal Register with request for grantee comments.

The Notice described an outcome performance measurement system developed for grantees that receive funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG) and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA). HUD incorporated final changes to the "Notice of Outcome Performance Measurement System for Community Planning and Development Formula Grant Programs", and published it in the Federal Register on March 7, 2006. The final notice includes comments received from grantees and has incorporated appropriate changes.

The final outcome performance measurement system includes objectives, outcome measures and indicators that describe outputs. There is a standardized list of outcome indicators that grantees will report on as appropriate for their chosen objectives and outcomes. Most output indicators required by the system do not require additional data collection or reporting.

Grantees will be required incorporate performance measurements into consolidated plans or action plans prepared for FY 2007. However, where possible, grantees are encouraged to incorporate the new performance measurements approach into consolidated plans or annual action plans that are being prepared for FY2006 funds. If your community has already submitted a FY 2006 Plan to HUD and the Plan has been approved, adding new performance measurement features would not constitute an amendment under 91.505(a); however, you should determine whether this addition would trigger an amendment under your local citizen participation plan.

In a related manner, you should note that on February 9, 2006 HUD published updates to its Consolidated Plan Regulations (24 CFR Parts 91 and 570) and is in process of revising Consolidated Planning Management Program (CPMP) Software in order to incorporate its new Performance Measurement standards. The updated publication include final streamlining and clarifying changes to the Consolidate Plan Regulations which encourage more results-oriented plans that will be useful to communities in assessing their own progress toward addressing the problems of low-income areas. The final rule also eliminated obsolete and redundant provisions and made other changes that conformed these regulations to HUD's regulations governing Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plans. This final rule takes into consideration public comments received as part of the December 30, 2004, proposed rule.

Fair Housing Month Proclamations

By Joseph Butch, Equal Opportunity Specialist

Fair Housing month in Western New York began with a celebration in Buffalo City Hall on Monday April 3, 2006. Mr. Stephen T. Banko, III, the Buffalo HUD Field Office Director Served as the Master of Ceremonies and discussed the importance of Fair Housing in HUD programs. Community leaders; Scott Gehl – Executive Director of Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Grace Andriette – Secretary of the Erie County Fair Housing Partnership, and Brenda McDuffie – CEO of the Buffalo Urban League reported on the history of fair housing in Western New York, current concerns, and the missions of their respective organizations. Antoine M. Thompson, Buffalo Masten District Councilman discussed a local fair housing law he drafted which is being considered for passage.



HUD Buffalo Field Office Director, Stephen T. Banko III, greets local community leaders who present him with local Fair Housing Proclamations.

The program centered around the presentation of Fair Housing Month Proclamations from Amherst, Buffalo, Cheektowaga, Erie County, and the Town of Hamburg with remarks by Susan Divita, Oswaldo Mestre, Jerome Gabryszak, Warren Galloway, and Steven J. Walters respectively. Angelo Lamberty, lead Equal Opportunity Specialist for the Buffalo HUD office concluded the program with inspiring remarks.

For further information on any of the articles in this publication, please contact your CPD Rep in the Buffalo Office at 716-551-5755.